An Incentive Based Approach to Dugong and Seagrass Conservation

Dunedin, December 2013

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Dugong MoU Secretariat
CMS Office – Abu Dhabi

• Funded by United Arab Emirates Government
• Hosted by the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD)
• Provides Secretariat and technical support to:
  — MoU on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs and their Habitats throughout their Range
• Provides Coordinating Unit and technical support to:
  — MoU on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Birds of Prey
• Provides technical support to:
  — Other regionally important marine species (e.g. marine turtles, inshore dolphins, sharks)
A Complex Problem
A Complex Problem: Dugongs, Seagrasses and People

The majority of the dugong’s range is coincident with seagrass beds along the coastlines of developing/least developed countries.

Coastal communities in developing/least developed countries are largely dependent on marine resources for income, food and cultural tradition.

Human activity/interactions in seagrass beds at these locations is high.
Threats to Dugong Populations and their Seagrass Ecosystems

Current key threats to

Dugongs:
- Bycatch
- Direct catch
- Vessel strikes
- Seagrass habitat loss/degradation

Seagrasses:
- Destructive fishing methods
- Land use impacts
- Cyclone damage
Finding Solutions
The Dugong, Seagrass & Coastal Communities Initiative (DSCCI)

An Implementation Tool for the Dugong MoU Conservation & Management Plan

Through the DSCCI, the Dugong MoU Secretariat aims to:

1. **Coordinate conservation efforts** across over 40 countries
2. **Raise awareness** of key threats
3. Develop & apply innovative **Conservation Tool Box** (including incentives)
4. Provide access to world’s best **technical & conservation expertise**
5. Facilitate **capacity building** for conservation
6. Generate **positive change** to safeguard dugongs & seagrasses
7. **Seek funds** for conservation programmes, e.g. **Global Pilot Projects**
A Simple Questionnaire
Dugong, Seagrass & Coastal Communities Initiative

International
- GEF Project Executive Steering Committee
- UNEP/DEPI
- Global Pilot Projects
- Dugong Global Genetics Project

Regional
- GEF Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project
  - South West Indian Ocean
  - South East Asia
  - Pacific

National
- Madagascar
- Sri Lanka
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- Vietnam
- Palau
- Seychelles
A Simple Questionnaire

Standardised Dugong Catch Survey Questionnaire

• Developing countries often lack resources to conduct site surveys

• A simple, low-cost questionnaire is an ideal way to gather baseline data to:
  - Assess marine mammal populations
  - Identify fishing effort including gear, location, time
  - Quantify bycatch of marine mammals
  - Identify conservation ‘hotspots’
  - Target conservation activities, where necessary
### Standardised catch survey questionnaire

Deployed in four geographic areas:

- **18 Countries**
- **6153 Respondents**
- **US $5000 - $10000**

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An Incentive Based Approach
Dugong, Seagrass & Coastal Communities Initiative

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- UNEP/DEPI
- Executing Agency: MbZSCF
- Global Pilot Projects
- Dugong Global Genetics Project

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- Seychelles
GEF Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project

Goal
To improve the conservation status of dugongs and their seagrass habitats across the Indian and Pacific Ocean basins

Objective
To enhance the effectiveness of conservation of dugongs and their seagrass ecosystems across the Indian and Pacific Ocean basins
**GEF Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project**

### Project Partners and Supporting Partners

#### Eight Partner Countries

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#### Supporting Partners

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Expected Outcomes

1. Enhanced **community-based stewardship** of dugongs and their seagrass ecosystems

2. **Sustainable fisheries practices** widely adopted through uptake of innovative incentive mechanisms and management tools

3. Increased availability and **access to critical knowledge** for effective decision-making (population status, distribution, threats)

4. Conservation priorities and measures incorporated into **relevant policy, planning and regulatory frameworks**
**Approach**

Work with Partners to:

- Identify baseline status, threats and conservation priorities:
  - National meetings with local NGOs
  - National and international reviews on dugong conservation status
  - International workshops
- Identify root causes of the identified threats
- Develop multilateral project activities to address causes
- Draw on global/regional skills, networks and experience
GEF Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project

Anticipated Project Legacies include:

• Clearing House Mechanism (internet based platform) established to:
  - Share knowledge among Range States
  - Encourage community involvement
  - Report conservation successes
  - Access technical expertise

• Raise profile of dugongs and community-based marine resource management, globally

• Leverage funds for conservation

• Contribute to Conservation Toolbox:
  - Successful approaches and self-sustaining incentives for positive behavioural change to be extended to other range states through

Global Pilot Projects
Dugong, Seagrass & Coastal Communities Initiative

International

- GEF Project Executive Steering Committee
- UNEP/DEPI

Global Pilot Projects

Dugong Global Genetics Project

Regional

- GEF Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project
  - South West Indian Ocean
  - South Asia
  - South East Asia
  - Pacific

- Global Pilot Projects
  - Gulf Dugong Action Programme
    - Bycatch
    - Gulf Collaboration
  - Mozambique
  - Myanmar
  - Malaysia
  - Vanuatu
  - Solomon Islands

National

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www.cms.int/species/dugong
Global Pilot Projects

Goal
To extend support to community-based dugong and seagrass conservation projects in all range states

Objective
Ensure the ongoing existence of dugongs and seagrass ecosystems for future generations

Expected Outcomes
1. Market-based incentives for responsible fishing methods implemented
2. Self-sustaining alternative incomes to relieve pressure on seagrass fisheries established
3. Community stewardship of dugong populations and seagrass ecosystems enhanced
Global Pilot Projects

Approach

Work with Partners to:

• Determine baseline status, threats and conservation priorities:
  - Address information gaps (research, media etc)
  - Stakeholder Meetings (community groups, NGOs, Gov.)

• Identify root causes of the identified threats

• Determine needs of:
  - Dugongs
  - Seagrasses
  - Coastal community
Global Pilot Projects

Project Legacies include:

• Community-led solutions to conservation problems:
  - Tailored solutions for targeted problems
• Increase capacity of local fishers, NGOs, eco-tourism operators
• Raise profile of dugongs and community-based resource management
• Leverage funds for conservation
• Contribute to Conservation Toolbox:
  - Closed conservation loop: self-sustaining incentives which reinforce positive behaviour
Thank you for your attention

Any Questions?